William Golding (1911-1993) - INFO

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William Golding

Born	19 September 1911 St Columb Minor, Newquay, Cornwall, UK
Died	19 June 1993 (aged 81) Perranarworthal, Cornwall, UK
Occupation	Writer
Nationality	British
Genres	Survivalist fiction, robinsonade, adventure, sea story, science fiction, essay, historical fiction, stageplay, poetry
Notable work(s)	*Lord of the Flies*
Notable award(s)	**Nobel Prize in Literature** 1983 **Booker Prize** 1980

Influences[show]
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Signature

Sir William Gerald Golding (19 September 1911 – 19 June 1993) was a British novelist, poet, playwright and Nobel Prize for Literature laureate, best known for his novel *Lord of the Flies*. He was also awarded the Booker Prize for literature in 1980 for his novel *Rites of Passage*, the first book of the trilogy *To the Ends of the Earth*.

In 2008, *The Times* ranked Golding third on their list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945".[1]

Contents

[show]

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[edit] Biography

[edit] Early life

William Golding was born in his grandmother's house, 47 Mountwise, St. Columb Minor, Newquay, Cornwall[2] and he spent many childhood holidays there. He grew up at his family home in Marlborough, Wiltshire, where his father (Alec Golding) was a science master at Marlborough Grammar School (1905 to retirement). Alec Golding was a socialist with a strong commitment to scientific rationalism, and the young Golding and his elder brother Joseph attended the school where his father taught.[3] His mother, Mildred, kept house at 29, The Green, Marlborough, and supported the moderate campaigners for female suffrage. In 1930 Golding went to Oxford University as an undergraduate at Brasenose College, where he read Natural Sciences for two years before transferring to English Literature.[4]

Golding took his B.A. (Hons) Second Class in the summer of 1934, and later that year his first book, *Poems*, was published in London by Macmillan & Co, through the help of his Oxford friend, the anthroposophist Adam Bittleston.

[edit] Marriage and family

Golding married Ann Brookfield on 30 September 1939 and they had two children, Judy and David.[2]

[edit] War service

William Golding joined the Royal Navy in 1940. During World War II, Golding fought in the Royal Navy and was briefly involved in the pursuit and sinking of Germany's mightiest battleship, the *Bismarck*. He also participated in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, commanding a landing ship that fired salvoes of rockets onto the beaches, and then in a naval action at Walcheren in which 23 out of 24 assault craft were sunk.[5] At the war's end, he returned to teaching and writing.[2]

[edit] Death

In 1985, Golding and his wife moved to Tullimaar House at Perranarworthal, near Truro, Cornwall, where he died of heart failure, eight years later, on 19 June 1993. He was buried in the village churchyard at Bowerchalke, South Wiltshire (near the Hampshire and Dorset county boundaries). He left the draft of a novel, *The Double Tongue*, set in ancient Delphi, which was published posthumously.[6][7] He is survived by his son, David, who still lives at Tullimaar House to the present day.

[edit] Career

[edit] Writing success

In September 1953, Golding sent a manuscript to Faber & Faber of London. Initially rejected by a reader there, the book was championed by Charles Monteith, then a new editor at the firm. He asked for various cuts in the text and the novel was published in September 1954 as *Lord of the Flies*. It was shortly followed by other novels, including *The Inheritors*, *Pincher Martin* and *Free Fall*.

Publishing success made it possible for Golding to resign his teaching post at Bishop Wordsworth's School in 1961, and he spent that academic year in the United States as writer-in-residence at Hollins College, near Roanoke, Virginia. Having moved in 1958 from Salisbury to nearby Bowerchalke, he met his fellow villager and walking companion James Lovelock. The two discussed Lovelock's hypothesis that the living matter of the planet Earth functions like a single organism, and Golding suggested naming this hypothesis after Gaia, the goddess of the earth in Greek mythology.

In 1970, Golding was a candidate for the Chancellorship of the University of Kent at Canterbury, but lost to the politician and leader of the Liberal Party Jo Grimond. Golding won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1979, the Booker Prize in 1980, and in 1983 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1988.[8]

[edit] Fiction

Golding's often allegorical fiction makes broad use of allusions to classical literature, mythology, and Christian symbolism. No distinct thread unites his novels (unless it be a fundamental pessimism about humanity), and the subject matter and technique vary. However his novels are often set in closed communities such as islands, villages, monasteries, groups of hunter-gatherers, ships at sea or a pharaoh's court. His first novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954; film, 1963 and 1990; play, adapted by Nigel Williams, 1995), dealt with an unsuccessful struggle against barbarism and war, thus showing the moral ambiguity and fragility of civilization. It has also been said that it is an allegory of World War II. *The Inheritors* (1955) looked back into prehistory, advancing the thesis that humankind's evolutionary ancestors, "the new people" (generally identified with *Homo sapiens sapiens*), triumphed over a gentler race (generally identified with Neanderthals) as much by violence and deceit as by natural superiority. *The Spire* 1964 follows the building (and near collapse) of a huge spire onto a mediæval cathedral church (generally assumed to be Salisbury Cathedral); the church and the spire itself act as a potent symbols both of the dean's highest spiritual aspirations and of his worldly vanities. His 1954 novel *Pincher Martin* concerns the last moments of a sailor thrown into the north Atlantic after his ship is attacked. The structure is echoed by that of the later Booker Prize winner by Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*. The 1967 novel *The Pyramid* comprises three separate stories linked by a common setting (a small English town in the 1920s) and narrator. *The Scorpion God* (1971) is a volume of three novellas set in a prehistoric African hunter-gatherer band ('Clonk, Clonk'), an ancient

Egyptian court ('The Scorpion God') and the court of a Roman emperor ('Envoy Extraordinary'). The last of these is a reworking of his 1958 play *The Brass Butterfly*.

Golding's later novels include *Darkness Visible* (1979), *The Paper Men* (1984), and the comic-historical sea trilogy *To the Ends of the Earth* (BBC TV 2005), comprising the Booker Prize-winning *Rites of Passage* (1980), *Close Quarters* (1987), and *Fire Down Below* (1989).

[edit] Bibliography

[edit] Poems

- *Poems* (1934)

[edit] Plays

- *The Brass Butterfly* (1958)

[edit] Novels

- *Lord of the Flies* (1954)
- *The Inheritors* (1955)
- *Pincher Martin* (1956)
- *Free Fall* (1959)
- *The Spire* (1964)
- *The Pyramid* (1967)
- *The Scorpion God* (1971)
- *Darkness Visible* (1979)
- *The Paper Men (1984)*
- *To the Ends of the Earth* (trilogy)
  - *Rites of Passage* (1980)
  - *Close Quarters*
  - *Fire Down Below* (1989)
- *The Double Tongue* (posthumous) (1995)[9]

[edit] Nonfiction

- *The Hot Gates* (1965)
- *A Moving Target* (1982)
- *An Egyptian Journal* (1985)

[edit] Unpublished works

- *Seahorse* was written in 1948. It is a biographical account of sailing on the south coast of England whilst in training for D-Day.[10]
- *Circle Under the Sea* is an adventure novel about a writer who sails to discover archaeological treasures off the coast of the Scilly Isles.[11]
- *Short Measure* is a novel set in a British boarding school.[12]

[edit] See also

- Novels by William Golding

- R. A. Gekoski and P.A.Grogan, *William Golding: A Bibliography*, London, André Deutsch, 1994. ISBN 978-0-233-98611-1
- "Boys Armed with Sticks: William Golding's Lord of the Flies." Chapter in B. Schoene-Harwood. Writing Men. Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

[edit] References

1. ^ (5 January 2008). The 50 greatest British writers since 1945. *The Times*. Retrieved on 2010-02-01.
2. ^ *a b c* Kevin McCarron, 'Golding, Sir William Gerald (1911–1993)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006 accessed 13 Nov 2007
3. ^ (Which should not be confused with Marlborough College, the nearby "public" boarding school).
4. ^ Carey, p.41, 49
5. ^ Mortimer, John (1986). *Character Parts*. London: Penguin. ISBN 0-14-008959-4.
6. ^ Golding, William (1996). *The Double Tongue*. London: Faber. ISBN 9780571178032.
7. ^ Bruce Lambert (20 June 1993). "William Golding Is Dead at 81; The Author of 'Lord of the Flies'". *The New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0919.html. Retrieved 2007-09-06.
8. ^ *London Gazette*: no. 51558, p. 13986, 13 December 1988. Retrieved 2010-05-25.
9. ^ *The Double Tongue* 1996 Faber reprint ISBN 978-0-571-17720-2
10. ^ Carey, p.130
11. ^ Carey, p.137
12. ^ Carey, p.142

[edit] Sources

- Carey, John (2009). *William Golding:The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies*. New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN 9781439187326.

[edit] External links

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- BBC television interview from 1959
- Golding's Life and work reviewed at the Educational Paperback Association
- Golding - Lord of the Flies in Georgian blog
- Biography of William Golding at the Nobel Prize website
- Interview by Mary Lynn Scott – Universal Pessimist, Cosmic Optimist
- William Golding Ltd Website of Golding family.
- *Last Words* An account of Golding's last evening by D. M. Thomas – Guardian – Saturday 10 June 2006 (*Review* Section)
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography article by Kevin McCarron (online edn, May 2006), *Golding, Sir William Gerald (1911–1993)*
- *The Cornish Banner*, article by Donald Adamson, published 2010, *William Golding Remembered*.
- Official Facebook page http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/William-Golding/138418262865472
- Nobel Prize Lecture: http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1983/golding-lecture.html
- Works by William Golding on Open Library at the Internet Archive